AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (*Currently Amended*) An e-commerce brokering broking-method for mediating commerce between a plurality of suppliers and a buyer via a digital data communication network, comprising the steps of:

[[(a)]] storing public data and non-public data in a database of an agent, said public data containing standardized attribute information about a product supplied by the plurality of suppliers, said public data able being enable-to be viewed so as to compare the attribute information of each supplier's productabout the product of the respective suppliers with each other, said non-public data comprising including-transaction rules set for each combination of a the respective-supplier and the buyer;

[[(b)]] said buyer's reading and viewing said public data from said database via said data communication network to select a desired product and to applying apply-to the agent for a transaction of a the-selected product, wherein the buyer selects a product from said database via said data communication network;

[[(c)]] if the buyer has applied for a transaction, said agent reads agent's reading-the transaction rules applicable to the buyer from said non-public data, prepares cost estimatesmaking estimates, and presents the cost estimates presenting them-to the buyer, said transaction rules depending upon the buyer having applied for the transaction; and

[[(d)]] selecting ~~said buyer's determining~~ a supplier and purchase conditions, wherein the

buyer selects a supplier ~~and~~ on the basis of the cost estimate and said agent carries out an

ordering procedure~~estimates presented in step (c); and~~

~~(e) said agent's carrying out ordering procedures for the buyer and the supplier~~ on the

basis of the purchase conditions.

2. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 1,

wherein said database ~~for the agent further~~ stores conversion data indicating correspondence

between code systems of different suppliers, wherein the code system of each supplier comprises

~~including~~ customer codes and product part numbers.

3. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 2,

wherein product information to be transmitted from the agent to the buyer and the supplier is

converted to information in code systems, each corresponding to the buyer or the supplier on the

basis of the conversion data.

4. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 1,

wherein the buyer can view said public data cost-free~~freely in the step (b)~~.

5. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the supplier registers, updates, maintains[[,]] and administers said public data stored in said database.

6. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the agent stores an unalterable ~~a~~ record of the ordering procedures in a storage means ~~whose data cannot be altered in the step (e)~~.

7. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method for mediating commerce between a plurality of suppliers and buyers via a digital data communication network, comprising the steps of:

[[(a)]] storing public data and non-public data in a database of an agent, said public data containing standardized attribute information about a product supplied by the plurality of suppliers, said public data able ~~being enable~~ to be viewed so as to compare the attribute information of each supplier's product ~~about the product of the respective suppliers with each other~~, said non-public data comprising ~~including~~ transaction rules set for each combination of a ~~the respective~~ supplier and the buyer;

[[(b)]] ~~said buyer's reading and viewing said public data from said database via said data communication network to select a desired product and to~~ applying ~~apply~~ to the agent for a transaction of a ~~the~~ selected product, wherein the buyer selects a product from said database via said data communication network;

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[[(c)]] if the buyer has applied for a transaction, said agent reads ~~agent's reading~~ the transaction rules applicable to the buyer from said non-public data, prepares cost estimates ~~making estimates~~, and presents the cost estimates ~~presenting them~~ to the buyer, ~~said transaction rules depending upon the buyer having applied for the transaction~~;

[[(d-1)]] ~~said buyer's~~ starting negotiations with the suppliers on the basis of the cost estimate ~~estimates~~ to determine purchase conditions and a supplier; and

[[(e)]] ~~said agent's~~ ordering the selected product, wherein said agent carries ~~carrying~~ out ordering procedures for the buyer and the supplier on the basis of the negotiated purchase conditions ~~determined in step (d-1)~~.

8. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 7, wherein the purchase conditions ~~already~~ stored in the non-public data are replaced by the negotiated purchase conditions ~~determined in the step (d-1)~~.

9. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 7, wherein said database for the agent ~~further~~ stores conversion data indicating correspondence between code systems of different suppliers, the code system of each supplier comprises ~~including~~ customer codes and product part numbers.

10. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering ~~broking~~ method according to claim 9, wherein product information to be transmitted from the agent to the buyer and the supplier is

converted to information in code systems, each corresponding to the buyer or the supplier on the

basis of the conversion data.

11. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering broking method according to claim

7, wherein the buyer can view said public data cost-free freely in the step (b).

12. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering broking method according to claim

7, wherein the supplier registers, updates, maintains[[,]] and administers said public data stored

in said database.

13. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering broking method according to claim

7, wherein the buyer determines a supplier and purchase conditions via by using one of the

methods of bidding conducted by the agent, individual negotiations, or and an auction with the

suppliers of the same products or services in the step (d-1).

14. (*Currently Amended*) The e-commerce brokering broking method according to claim

7, wherein the agent stores an unalterable a record of the ordering procedures in a storage means

whose data cannot be altered in the step (e).

15. (*Currently Amended*) An e-commerce brokering broking system for mediating

commerce between a plurality of suppliers and a buyer via a digital data communication

network, comprising:

a database for storing public data and non-public data, the public data able being enabled

to be viewed by standardizing attribute information about the same products supplied by the

plurality of suppliers so as to compare the attribute information of the productsproduct with each

other, and the non-public data comprising including transaction rules set for each combination of

a supplier and the buyer;

a supplier site computer connected to said digital data communication network;

a buyer site computer connected to said digital data communication network; and

an agent site computer connected to said digital data communication network, wherein

said agent site computer delivers said public data to said buyer site computer, makes cost

estimates on the basis of said non-public data in response to an application for negotiations for of

the desired product selected from the buyer site computer, and carries out ordering procedures

for the selected product.

16. (*Currently Amended*) A database for use in an e-commerce brokering broking method

according to in claim 1, wherein the database stores public data able enabled to be viewed by

standardizing attribute information about the same products supplied by the plurality of suppliers

so as to compare the attribute information with each other and non-public data including rules

conditions set for each combination of a supplier and a buyer.

17. (*Currently Amended*) The database according to claim 16, wherein the database further stores conversion data indicating correspondence between supplier code systems comprising including customer codes varying according to a supplier and product part numbers.

18. (*Currently Amended*) A database for use in an e-commerce brokering broking method according to in claim 7, wherein the database stores public data able enabled to be viewed by standardizing attribute information about the same products supplied by the plurality of suppliers so as to compare the attribute information with each other and non-public data including transaction rules set for each combination of a supplier and a buyer.

19. (*Currently Amended*) The database according to claim 18, wherein the database further stores conversion data indicating correspondence between supplier code systems comprising including customer codes varying according to a supplier and product part numbers.

20. (*Currently Amended*) An e-commerce brokering broking method for mediating commerce between a plurality of suppliers and buyers via a digital data communication network, comprising the steps of:

[[(a)]] providing a database that which stores public data and non-public data, said public data comprising including standardized attribute information about the same kind of products supplied from the plurality of suppliers, and said non-public data comprising including transaction rules set for each combination of a supplier and a buyer;

[[(b)]] presenting said public data to a buyer site computer via digital data

communication network so that a the-buyer can compare a performance and price of the same

kind of product of different suppliers to select a supplier supplying a desired product;

[[(c)]] receiving an application from the buyer site computer via the digital data

communication network, the application being for transaction of the desired product of the

selected supplier;

[[(d)]] reading the transaction rule set for the buyer and the selected supplier from said

database, and making a cost an-estimate to send the estimate-to the buyer site computer;

[[(e)]] receiving a decision from the buyer site computer via the digital data

communication network, said decision containing a supplier from which the buyer purchases the

desired product and purchase conditions determined on the basis of the cost estimate-prepared in

the step (d); and

[[(d)]] conducting ordering procedures for the buyer and the supplier on the basis of the

purchase condition-and the transaction condition.